

A
S E R M O N
Preached before the
Q U E E N
A T
W H I T E - H A L L,
March the 1st. 169^o.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,
EDWARD Lord Bishop of *Worcester*.

Published by Her Majesties Special Command.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *Henry Mortlock* at the *Phenix* in
St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1691.

A
SERMON

Preached before the

QUEEN

AT

WHITE-HALL.

March the 15. 1692.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD
EDWARD Lord Bishop of Worcester.

Printed by J. Streater at the Sign of the Gun.

LONDON.

Printed for Henry Mortlock at the Sign of the
St Pauls Church-Yard.

enough to be known to be his Disciples and Followers, but yet his Doctrine made little Impression on their Minds, and scarce any Alteration in the Course of their Lives. **SERMON**

Preached before the

QUEEN

At WHITE HALL

March the 19. 1691

S. LUKE VI. 46.

And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

THESE few Words contain in them a smart and serious *Exposition* of our Blessed Saviour, with such who professed great Kindness to him in their Words, but shew'd no Regard to his Commands. They owned him to be the *Messias*, and depended upon him for their Happiness, and were willing

enough to be known to be his Disciples and Followers, but yet his Doctrine made little Impression on their Minds, and scarce any Alteration in the Course of their Lives. They loved to be where Christ was, to hear his Doctrine, to see his Miracles, to observe his Conversation, to admire what he did and said; but herein lay the whole of their Religion; for although they named the name of Christ, and it may be rejoiced and gloried in it, yet they did not depart from iniquity. Now, considering the Circumstances of that time, this seems to have been an unaccountable kind of Hypocrisie. For their calling Christ Lord, Lord, spoiled their Interest in this World; and not doing what he said, debarr'd them from the hopes of Happiness by him in another. For, if they own'd him to be their Lord, they were bound to believe him in what he declared; and there is nothing he doth more expressly warn men of, than hoping to be saved by him without obeying his Commands. *Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.* Which is shorter expressed, but to the same purpose here by S. Luke; *And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*

Mat. 7. 21.

I say? As though he had said to them,
 "It is in vain to think to please and flatter me
 "with your Words, when your Actions are
 "disagreeable to them. To call me Lord, Lord,
 "is to own my Authority in commanding you;
 "but to do this, and yet wilfully to disobey
 "me, is to shew your Hypocrisie and Folly to-
 "gether. *Most remarkable instances of those*
 to Which Exposition of Christ, was not con-
 fined to that time, no more than his Com-
 mands were; but it hath always the same
 Force, where Persons are guilty of the same
 Folly. For, although now none can plead for
 themselves, as they did, *We have eaten and drank* Luk. 13. 26.
in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets;
 yet we may build as presumptuous hopes up-
 on Privileges of another kind, which may
 be as ineffectual to our Salvation, as these were
 when Christ said to those very Persons, *Depart* v. 27.
from me all ye workers of iniquity. We all bear
 the Name of Christ, and own his Doctrine, and
 partake of his Sacraments; and in one of them
 profess to eat and drink in his Presence, and at his
 Table, and renew our solemn Baptismal Vow
 and Covenant with him as our Lord and Sa-
 viour; and so we pray to him and profess to
 depend upon him for our Salvation; and there-
 fore

fore we are as deeply concerned in the Scope and Design of these Words, as ever the *Jews* were to whom our Saviour spake them.

But that I may the better Apply them to the Consciences of all those who hear me this Day, and to make my Discourse more Usefull and Practical, I shall single out some of the most Remarkable Instances of those Duties, which Christ hath enjoyned to his Disciples of all Ages and Nations; and then shew how just and reasonable it is that all who call Christ *Lord, Lord*, should *do what he saith* about them; and yet that the Generality of those who do so, do very little Mind or Regard them.

The main part of those Duties which Christ requires from all his Disciples may be reduced to these three Heads:

I. Such as relate to the *Government of our Passions*,

II. To the *Government of our Speech*.

III. To the *Government of our Actions*; so, as that we lead a *Sober, Righteous and Godly Life*.

I. As to the *Government of our Passions*. And that may be considered three ways.

1. As to the things which are apt to *Provoke* us.

2. As

2. As to the things which are apt to *Tempt* us.

3. As to the things which *Concern* us, in respect of our Condition in this World.

(1) As to the things which are apt to *Provoke* us. Such is the frame of human Nature, that we are very tender and sensible not only of any real Hurt or Injury which may be done to our Bodies or Estates, but of any thing we apprehend may do so, or that touches upon our Reputation. And where the Injury is real, yet that which often touches most to the quick, is the *Contempt* which is expressed in it. For, if the same thing be done by one, we are satisfied did it not out of any Unkindness or Ill-will, the matter is easily passed over, and makes no breach or difference between them. But, if it be intended for an Affront, although it be never so little, then the brisker mens Spirits are, and the higher Opinion they have of themselves, so much deeper Impression is presently made in the Mind; and that inflames the Heart and puts the Blood and Spirits into a quicker Motion in order to the Returning the Affront on him that gave it. But there is a considerable difference in Mens Tempers to be observed; some are very quick and hasty, others

are

are slower in the beginning, but more violent afterwards; the Passions in the former, are like a Flash of Gun-powder, which begins suddenly, makes a great Noise and is soon over; but the other are like a burning Fever, which is lower at first, but rises by degrees, till the whole body be in a Flame. The one is more troublesome, but the other more dangerous; the Care of the one must be in the Beginning; of the other in the Continuance of Passion, lest it turn into Hatred, Malice and Revenge. But, what through the Natural Heat of Temper in some, the Jealousie and Suspicion in others, the crossing each others Designs and Inclinations, the misconstruction of Words and Actions, the Carelessness of some and the Forwardness and Peevishness of others, Mankind are apt to lead very uneasie Lives with respect to one another; and must do so unless they look after the Government of themselves as to real or imaginary Provocations.

There are two Things I shall therefore speak to,

- (1) That it is Reasonable that a Restraint should be laid on Mens violent Passions.
- (2) That Christ hath laid no unreasonable Restraint upon them.

(1) That

(1.) That it is Reasonable that a Restraint should be laid on Mens violent Passions. And that on a twofold Account.

(1) With Respect to the common Tranquillity of human Life.

(2) To the particular Tranquillity of our own Minds.

(1) To the common Tranquillity of human Life. The great Comfort and Pleasure of it depends on the mutual benefit Men have from Society with one another. This cannot be enjoy'd without particular Persons abridging themselves of some natural Rights for a common Benefit. If we could suppose no such thing as Government or Society among men, we must suppose nothing but Disorder and Confusion; every one being his own Judge and Executioner too in case of any apprehended Wrong or Injury done to him. Which condition of Life having all imaginable Uneasiness attending it, by perpetual Fears and Jealousies and Mistrusts of one anothers Powers, there was a Necessity that they must come to some common Terms of Agreement with each other; so as to fix their Rights and to establish a just Measure of Proceeding in case of Wrong. For every Mans Revenging his own Injury ac-

according to his own Judgment, was one of those great Inconveniencies, which was to be remedied by Society, Laws and Government. And Mankind entering into Society for this End, doth suppose it possible for them to keep under their violent Passions; and to submit their private Injuries to the equal Arbitration of Laws; or else they are made to no purpose, unless it be to punish men for what they cannot avoid. For many of those Crimes which all the Laws of Mankind do punish, as wilfull Murder, may be committed through the force of a violent Passion; and if that be irresistible, then the Laws which punish it are not founded on Reason and Justice. But if such Laws are very Just and Reasonable, as no doubt they are, then all Mankind are agreed that Mens violent Passions may and ought to be Restrained in some Cases. The only Dispute then remaining is, whether it may not be as fitting to restrain our Passions in such Cases, which the Law takes no notice of. For, there is a Superiour Law, viz. that of Reason whereby we are to be Governed; and the Publick Laws do not forbid or punish Offences because they are unreasonable, but because they are dangerous and hurtfull to human Society.

And

And if it be allow'd to be fitting and necessary for men to keep their Passions within the Compass of Laws; why not within the Conduct of Reason? Especially, when a great deal of Disorder may happen; and disturbance of the Peace and Quiet of human Society, by the Violence of Passions, which may be out of the Reach of human Laws. And every Man is bound by virtue of his being in Society, to preserve the Tranquillity of it as much as he can.

(2) The Tranquillity of our own Minds depends upon it. And certainly, that is a very Reasonable Motive for the Government of our Passions; since those are the Occasions of all the Storms and Tempests within our breasts. For the Government of Reason is calm, even and serene, full of Peace and all the Blessings which follow it; but the Government of Passion is tyrannical and boisterous; uncertain and troublesome; never free from doing Mischief to it self or others. The greatest Pleasure of Passion is Revenge; and yet that is so unnatural, so full of anxiety and fear of the Consequents of it; that he who can subdue this unruly Passion hath more real Pleasure and Satisfaction in his mind, than he who seeks to gratifie it most. For, if he be disappointed, then

he must be uneasy by failing of his end; if he be not, then he is tormented with the Apprehensions of what may follow it. So that there is nothing which conduces more to the greatest Blessing of Life, the Tranquillity of our Minds, than the Government of our Passions doth.

(2) Let us now see, whether our Saviour hath laid any Unreasonable Restraint upon our Passions.

There are Three things he particularly requires in order to the Government of them.

(1) *Meekness*. (2) *Patience*. (3) *Love of Enemies*. And I hope to make it appear, that there is nothing unreasonable in any of these.

(1) *Meekness*. Which is such a Gentleness of Temper, as makes a Man not easie to be provoked. There is a great deal of difference between *Meekness* and *Stupidity*; the one arises from a natural Dullness and Insensibility; the other from a fixed, calm and composed Temper of Mind; and is founded on two, which are both wise things, especially when they go together; and those are, *Consideration* and *Resolution*. For, nothing tends to the abating the heat and violence of Passion so much,

as

as *Consideration* doth, and *Resolution* makes it effectual. If it were nothing but the time it gives, that is of great force for letting out the inward Fermentation, which will spend it self in great Measure, if Vent be given to it. Whereas, if it be kept in and suffer'd to work upon it self, it turns from a hasty Passion to Malice and Revenge. But *Consideration* is of greater Use, as it suggests Arguments from Reason to quell and allay the sudden heat of Passions; as, That, it Exposes the Weakness of our Minds, in not being able to keep under that which they ought to Govern and have Power to Command; That, it is a great Folly to disorder our selves, at the Pleasure of our Enemies; or, at such Accidents, which we can neither prevent, nor remove; That, the wisest thing we can do, is not to betray our Folly to others, if we cannot wholly suppress it in our selves; That, we weaken the Reins of the Government of our Selves, by not holding them with a stricter hand; and make our Passions more seditious and turbulent by letting them alone; That, the more we try to command our selves the easier we shall do it; That our most Rebellious Passions will submit, if they find we are in Earnest; That, it is the Way to make
that

that a real Injury by being disturbed, which would lose its Force by being neglected; That, while we are true to our selves, we are out of the reach of our Enemies, and then we are most under their Power, when we are least under our own; That, the great Work of Religion lies within us; and that we are in a very ill Condition if neither Reason nor Religion can keep us in order. By such *Considerations* as these, men are brought to a more calm and composed Temper, which is that *Meekness* which our Saviour requires. And to this he seems to appropriate the Happiness of this Life.

Matt. 5. 5. *Blessed are the Meek for they shall inherit the Earth.* What doth our Blessed Saviour mean by *Inheriting the Earth*? Is there any thing like *Blessedness* to be expected in this Troublesome and Sinfull World? Not Absolutely; but Comparatively there may; and if there be any thing like it to be had here, the *Meek* may put in for the largest share of it. For they have more Friends and fewer Enemies than the rest of the World; they enjoy themselves with more quietness and satisfaction, and are less disturbed at the Noise and tumultuous Passions of the rest of Mankind. O happy Temper! To be calm and easie and in good humour,

humour, in the midst of Disorders and Provocations; To enjoy the Peace and Serenity of the Regions above, in the midst of the Storms and Tempests, here below; To raise the Mind above the Power of Detraction; and thereby to suffer the Venom of Malicious Tongues to scatter and disperse it self in the open Air, if it doth not return to the Breasts of those from whom it came. S. James might therefore well call it the *Meekness of Wisdom*, not only because Jam. 3. 13. Wisdom directs it, but that it consists very much in the Exercise of it.

2. *Patience*. For let Persons be endued with the *Spirit of Meekness*, yet the World is so forward and hard to be pleased, so captious and ill-natured, so ready to apprehend an Injury and to Revenge it, that there is great need of *Patience*, not only in bearing the Troubles of Life, but in forbearing to return evil for evil. And this is that which our Saviour particularly requires of his Disciples. He strictly forbids all *Causeless Anger*, all *Contumelious* and *Reproachfull Words*; and when Injuries are done Matt. 5. 22. us, he commands us *that we resist not evil*; but v. 39. if one smite us on the right Cheek, to turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the Law and take away thy coat, let him have thy v. 40. cloak.

v. 41. *cloak also. And whosoever will compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.* Now here lies a real Difficulty; for this seems to go beyond the bounds of human Patience: To pass by Affronts without taking notice of them; not to Resent the Injuries of those whom no Kindness can oblige, seems to be a great degree of Vertue; and it is so; but to bind hand and foot when we receive them, to invite them to do more, and to offer our selves to double the proportion, seems wholly unaccountable to Reason, and inconsistent with the Wisdom of Christianity.

The true Account of the meaning of these Commands is this; Our Saviour takes it for granted, that all considerable matters of Right and Wrong were determin'd by Laws; as the most equal Measures between Parties; and these he meddled not with; For, saith he, to one that desired him to interpose in such a
 Luk. 12. 14 *Matter; Who made me a Judge or a Divider among you?* Therefore he doth not abridge his Followers from making use of these Laws and Courts of Judicature, which are established for matters of common Justice and Equity; But all the Laws in the World cannot alter the Temper of some mens minds, who are peevish
 and

and quarrelsome, who are provoked on any slight Occasion, and it may be are provoked if you gave them none. Like the Roman Orator, *Seneca* mentions, who was angry with every one that came near him; and when a Client sought to humour him in every thing, he was as last angry with him, because he did not provoke him. There are some Tempers so easily provoked; and yet so hard to be reconciled, as if their Original Sin did not lie in *Concupiscence* but in *Ill-nature*. And yet, even that is a kind of *Concupiscence*; for the *Stoicks* defined Anger by *Dibido*; and said it was a Lust of *Revenge*; and so far, seem'd more unreasonable than that of *Intemperance*; because this aims only at Pleasure, in things which are apt to produce it, (however mean and unreasonable) but the other is an extravagant and unnatural Pleasure, which arises from anothers Pain; And differs from the other, as the Pleasures of evil Spirits do from those of Brutes.

But if we happen to converse among such who take Pleasure in doing us Injuries upon every slight Occasion, by some Personal Affronts, or litigious Suits, or unjust Exactions in ordinary Cases; what are we to do? May we not Right ourselves by Retaliating the Injury upon them?

Since the Law of Moses did allow of Retalia-
 tion in case of real Injuries, *an Eye for an Eye,*
a Tooth for a Tooth; and so by an Equitable
 Construction of the Law, it may extend to
 Personal Affronts. Thus the Jews indeed un-
 derstood it; but if our Saviour had allow'd
 their Interpretation, he would never have said,
But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil. There
 was a Spirit of Revenge in them, so as they
 would pass by no kind of Injuries, although
 they were such, which the Law had made no
 Provision for; and this our Saviour Condemns.
 But here comes a hard Case to be resolved;
 not so in it self, but the Custom of the World
 hath made it so; for when a mistaken Notion
 of Honour and Conscience come in Competition,
 it is not an easie thing to forego Honour for
 Conscience sake. The Case is, concerning Con-
 tumelious Words and Personal Affronts, which are
 given to Men of Honour. Is it unlawfull for
 them to Right themselves according to the re-
 ceived Customs among them, when the Law
 takes no notice of such Injuries; and so seems
 to leave it to them? This is the Case, and I
 have put it as fair as the thing will bear. I
 might say in general that our Saviour makes
 no distinction of Mens Honour and Quality

in his Commands; and that for all that I can see; such must be saved on the same Terms with others; That *Honour* is but an imaginary thing when it stands in Competition with the Rule of *Conscience*; and that no Custom is to be observed against *Reason* and *Religion*: But here lies the insuperable Difficulty; how the Exposing one anothers Lives for the sake of *Reproachfull Words* or *Personal Affronts*, can be Reconciled to this Command of Christ? For my part, I cannot see how it is possible to do it; since in this Case, there is a studied and premeditated Design of Revenge in the Case of such Injuries which are here mention'd; and that of the highest Nature, and beyond any Proportion between the Offence and the Punishment; which all men out of Passion, think, in common Justice ought to be consider'd. I know some Casuists in the Church of Rome, allow it to be lawfull to take away the Lives of any who give them *Contumelious Words*; but these have been condemned as very loose Casuists; And they have found out a subtle way of directing the Intention, whereby to keep from breaking the Laws of Christ; but this is too subtle to be reconciled with the Plainness of his Laws; and they all deny it to

Gr. de J.B.
 & P. 1. 2.
 1. 10.

be lawfull by way of Revenge. Others say much better, that although *Nature* may seem to give an Injured Person a Right to vindicate himself by the best Means he can; yet that Right is so restrained and limited by Christ's Commands in this case, that it is by no means lawfull for *Christians* to use it; and to pretend to do it for a Reparation of honour, *et ratione & pietate valde alienam videtur*, is repugnant both to Reason and Religion; saith one, who very well understood the Rules of both.

But all the pretended Right of *Nature* is taken away by *Laws*; and where those declare it to be *Willfull Murder* to take away the Life of another on such Accounts as these, there is no colour left for natural Right, which supposes no determination by *Laws*.

I confess it requires a more than ordinary Degree of *Christian Fortitude* as well as *Pacience*, to be able to despise such a prevailing Custom. But if Men hope to be saved by Christ, they must observe his Commands; and if they once declare, that they are Resolved to do so in this particular, (if they do the same in all others) it will be then thought to be Conscience and not Cowardice for them to decline

a Chal-

a Challenge; and that upon good Grounds they condemn such a Custom, which no Good man could ever Approve, nor any Wise Man Defend.

3. *Love of Enemies.* This seems to be harder yet. Is it not enough to bear them; but must we love them too? Yes, Christ hath strictly required it.

But I say unto you, Love your Enemies; and again in this very Chapter, *But love your Enemies.* If he had bid Men love their Friends and take heed of their Enemies, there are some Ages of the World, wherein this had been no impertinent Advice. But how can those be supposed to love their Enemies, who hardly love any thing but themselves? Self-Opinion, Self-Will, Self-Interest prevail over the far-greatest Part of Mankind; I wish I could not say, even among those who call Christ *Lord, Lord.* But Self-Love as natural as it is, must be artificially disguised; for, if it appears too openly, it meets with so much Self-Love in others, that it will not be easily born. Therefore the most crafty Lovers of themselves, if they design to have the Love of others, must conceal their inward Passion. For, he that appears to set up himself, is certain to make

Luk. 6. 27.
35.

make the rest of Mankind his Enemies; for, even those who would do the same, will be the most displeased with those who do it. Therefore, the most certain way to Honour and universal Esteem, is to mind the Good of others more than our own; to be just and Charitable and Kind to all; and to oblige as many as we can, without Partiality or Prejudice. And this, I say, is that *Love of Enemies* which our Saviour requires, which doth not suppose the same kind of Affection to them which we have to our Friends, for that is grounded on mutual Love and Good-will to each other; which, if we suppose in Enemies, we suppose a Contradiction; for that is to suppose them not to be Enemies, but Friends. What then is it which our Saviour means? It is certainly an Universal Charity, or a Readiness of Mind to do Good to all, although they have Personally provoked, or Injured us. And so Christ himself explains it, by doing Good to our Enemies, praying for them and relieving them in their Necessities; and he proposes the best Example in the World for our imitation; and that of God himself, *who maketh his Sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* But none can suppose that
the

the righteous and holy God, can have the same Love or Kindness for the Evil, which he hath for the Good, or for the Unjust, which he hath for the Just. So that this Precept, which being misunderstood, seems to be irreconcilable to human Nature, contains in it, nothing but what all Mankind approve in others, as unwilling as they are to practise it themselves.

And now, it is time to make a stand, and to look about us, for, I have gone through our Saviour's Commands with Respect to the things which are apt to provoke us. And where are those *Christians* to be found, who do what Christ hath said herein, who do yet every day call him *Lord, Lord*? If Peevishness and Forwardness, perpetual Uneasiness and Discontent; If Rancour and Bitterness, Strife and Envy, Faction and Animosity; If Impatience of apprehended Injuries, and the making of Enemies, instead of *loving them*, were the Marks of good Christians, we should find Number enough, even among those who pretend to Reformation. We profess to thank God for a late great Deliverance from the hands of our *Enemies*, I mean as to our Religion; (and truly there appears more and more Reason for it, since it is so much more evident that

the

the Design was no less than a total Subversion of our Religion.

But what a sad Requital is this, for so great Mercies, to break out into *Factions* and *Parties*, instead of pursuing the common Interest of our Religion? Instead of laying aside Differences about Religion, to increase them; nay, to make Religion itself not only the Subject of their Quarrels, but of their Scorn and Contempt. What can be said or hoped for, as to such a froward, unthankfull, Atheistical Generation of Men? Thanks be to God, there are not wanting some Extraordinary Examples of true *Piety* and *Goodness* among us; and of *Meekness*, *Patience* and *Universal Charity*; and truly there needs a great deal, to bear up against the daring and insolent *Profaneness* and *Irreligion* of others. When I once see a true Spirit of Reformation prevail among us, not merely as to Doctrines, but as to Mens Lives and Tempers; when I see them more zealous for God and Religion, than for the Interest of particular Parties; when I see them really promoting Peace and Unity, and not making a Pretence of it to serve private Ends, I may then hope for a lasting Settlement of the true Religion among us. But till then—

(2) I proceed to the second Head of our Saviour's Commands, and that is as to such things which *Tempt* us. S *James* saith, *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn aside of his own Lust and imiced.* Jam. 1. 14. Lust is the ungoverned Desire of Sensual Pleasure. Now, as to this, Christ hath laid so strict a Command, as seems very hard for human Nature to observe. For he not only forbids the Act of *Adultery*, but the Tendencies to it; viz. the *Impurity* of the inward *Desires*, and of *Looks* and *Glances*, and makes these to be *Adultery in the Heart*. Matt. 5. 28. What is that? For *Adultery* is an outward, deliberate Act, and hath *Injustice* as well as *Unclean-ness* in it. But *Desires* and *Looks*, are sudden and transient things, which may leave no permanent Effect behind them. However, our Saviour, to shew how much God abhors *Impurity*, (who sees into the Secret Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart,) declares that the unmortified Desires and inward Lusts are very displeasing to God; And therefore that those who hope to see God, must be *Pure in heart*. Matt. 5. 8. Which as it implies a sincere Endeavour to Suppress all inward Motions which are contrary to it, is both a Reasonable and Necessary Duty.

D

But

But the hardest part of Christ's Commands in this matter, is that which requires us to
 Matt. 5. 29, *pluck out right eyes and to cut off right hands:*
 30.

Must the blind and the lame only go to Heaven? But he speaks of such sinfull Inclinations in us, which seem as delightfull and usefull to us as to the Pleasures of Life, as *a right Eye or a right Hand*; yet we must part with them, if we ever hope to get to Heaven. Not, by any one single Act like *the cutting off a Hand, or plucking out an Eye*, but by a serious, constant and sincere Endeavour to Mortifie and Subdue them. And if this be thought hard, the Consideration of future Happiness and Misery ought to Reconcile us to it; and surely it is Reasonable, we should part with something which is pleasant to us here, for the sake of an infinitely greater Pleasure in another World; especially since this is only a Sensual Pleasure, which cannot be pursued without Disturbance of the Mind, and can be enjoy'd but for a little time; and the other is no less than Eternal Felicity of Soul and Body together.

(3) As to the things which Concern us, as to our Condition in this World. There is no Precept of Christ which seems more inconsistent

consistent with the Wisdom of this World, than this doth. For, as that lies in taking great Care for the future; so our Saviour on the contrary seems to allow none at all. *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your* Matt. 6. 15. *Life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink,* Luk. 12. 22. *nor yet, for your Body, what ye shall put on.* What doth our Saviour mean by this? Would he have all Christians live like the *young Ravens*, Luk. 12. 24. *meerly upon Providence?* Or, as the *Lillies of the Field*, which grow and flourish and yet neither Toil nor Spin? But Man is an Intelligent Creature, and apt to forecast and contrive things for his future advantage, and God seems to have left things very much to his own Care and Providence; and generally speaking, Mens Condition in this World is according to it. What then? Doth our Saviour indulge Men in a Careless, Easie, Unthinking Life? Or, require that his Disciple's thoughts ought to be wholly taken up with matters of Religion? Not, if *S. Paul* knew his meaning; for he saith, *Those who provide not for their own, have denied the Faith and are worse than Infidels.* But this only seems to make the Difficulty greater. Therefore to clear it, we must attend to our Saviour's

Scope and Design, which was, to perswade his Disciples to *lay up their Treasure in Heaven, to seek the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness in the first place*; and then represents this World and another as two opposite Interests, so that *one cannot serve two Masters*; which implies a Contradiction to each other. So that what follows must be understood in such a Sense, as is inconsistent with the main Duty, of looking after Heaven as our Happiness; and therefore ought not to be understood of a Prudent, Necessary Care, but of an Anxious, Solicitous, Distrustfull Care, which implies that we place our Happiness too much here. And therefore S. Luke subjoins these Commands to the Parable of the Rich Man, whose heart was in his Barns and Store-houses, and took great Care to lay in Provision enough for a sensual and voluptuous Life: But to shew the unspeakable Folly of such vain Contrivances, it was said to him,

Luk. 12. 18, 19. *This night shall thy Soul be required of thee; and then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?*

II. I come now to our Saviour's Commands with Respect to the Government of our Speech.

Speech. And he seems to be very severe as to this, when he saith, *That every Idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof at the Day of Judgment.* Matt. 12. 36. What a heavy Account then, are those to make, whose time is so much taken up with idle and impertinent talk; and who can hardly forbear it, when they should be most serious? Is it unlawfull then to speak any more than is just necessary to express our Minds? May we not imploy our Speech sometimes for our innocent Diversion and Entertainment if we keep within the bounds of Prudence and Religion? I do not see that our Saviour forbids it. For the *idle Words* he speaks of there, are profane, false, abusive, malicious Reproaches of Religion and the means to confirm it; as appears by his bringing it just after the mention of the *Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*. v. 31. So that all such Abuses of Speech which entrench on Piety and Good Manners, or Truth and Sincerity, are certainly forbidden by him. But there is one particular Vice of Conversation, which he hath with most force of Argument forbidden; and yet (which is a great shame to any that would be called Christians) none more common among some who would pretend
to

Matt. 5. 34, 37.

to understand the Methods of Conversation and the best Modes of Speaking; and that is *the profane Custom of Swearing*. I take it for granted, that all are *Christians* among us, till they disown it themselves; and however Men may Act, they are not willing to Renounce all hopes of Salvation by Christ. I beseech them then to consider, what a Contempt of his Authority is implied in this, too fashionable sort of Profaneness? The other Duties I have mention'd, have a great Difficulty in them, as to our Tempers and Inclinations; but nothing of that Nature can be so much as pretended as to this. For no Man could ever say, that he had a *Swearing Constitution*, or that it was an *Infirmity* of his *Nature*. There is nothing in it but the Tyranny of a very bad Custom; which every Prudent Man, as well as Good Christian, will see Cause to break. But what a Reproach is it, to the very Profession of Christianity among us for so plain, so easie a Command of Christ to be broken so commonly, so unconcernedly, so impertinently, as is every day done; and yet they call Christ *Lord, Lord*? In all Ages, there were some pretended Christians, who did not sincerely obey the Commands of our Saviour;

viour; but their Hypocrisie was of a finer and more Artificial make; this is gross and rude, without the Common Respect which is due to the Religion we all profess to be that, or hope to be saved by. Some say, a Custom in it self is no Sin, because it is no Act; but certainly a Customary breach of a plain Command is so much greater a Sin, as it implies a greater Contempt of him that made it; and when Custom hath taken away the Sense of a Fault, it is so much more aggravated by it. It is really a matter to be wonder'd at, that among Persons professing a better sort of Breeding, as well as *Christianity*; a Vicious Custom, so Untempting in it self, so Unbecoming the Decency of Conversation, so Affronting to the Divine Majesty, so directly contrary to the Commands of Christ, should get so deep a rooting in ordinary Conversation, that it seems almost impossible to be Reformed. But till Men do think of breaking off such a Practise as this, I despair of ever seeing them Reform other things which have a deeper Root in their natural Inclinations, and have greater Advantages as to this World.

III. The Commands of Christ extend to the whole Course of our Actions; so, as that we lead a *sober, righteous, and godly Life*.

1. As to Sobriety. *Take heed to your selves;*
 Luk. 21. 34 *faith Christ, lest at any time your hearts be over-
 charged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness.* These
 are somewhat hard words for that which our
 Age hath learnt to express in much softer
 terms of *Eating and Drinking well*. Luxury
 seems a thing quite forgotten to be a Sin, a-
 mong those who are most guilty of it; and
 Intemperance thought so uncertain a thing, as
 though it were impossible to tell when Per-
 sons are guilty of it. 'Tis true, that Tempe-
 rance may vary as to the Degrees and Limits
 of it; and we do not pretend to define it by
 Grains and Scruples. But still, there ought
 to be a *Governing our Appetites according to
 Reason*, and that is Temperance. But what is
Reason in this Case? Some send us to the
 Brutes to find out what Reason is; and they
 tell us, it lies in a plain simple Diet, such as
 the Beasts use, without provoking or raising
 the Appetite. But I know not where God
 hath forbidden the Use of Art, as to our Ea-
 ting

ting and Drinking; and if this were so, we must practise Temperance only in the Use of Water and Acorns. If meer *Satisfaction of Nature* were the exact Rule of Temperance, then eating or drinking any thing beyond it were a Sin; which would fill the Minds of those who are afraid to sin, with infinite Scruples; and make all Feasting unlawfull. Yet our Saviour was present at one in *Cana of Galilee*; and did a Miracle relating to it. But we need not run into Niceties in this matter; For, *Intemperance* is either an over-charging of Nature, so as to make it to sink or totter under the load; or it is a wanton humouring and pleasing the Appetite, not, for the Service of Nature, but for the Pleasure of Eating and Drinking; Or, it is as *S. Paul* calls it, making a *God of their belly*, by Sacrificing their Time, their Study, their Estates in order to the filling and pleasing of it. Any of these ways, it is no Difficulty to understand what *Intemperance* is; I wish it were as easie to avoid it.

Phil. 3. 19.

2. As to *Righteousness*. Our Saviour hath given one Admirable Rule; which all Persons agree to be of excellent Use in all Contracts

tracts and Transactions of Men with one another; v. 31. *And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.* Which is an Universal Rule of Justice and Equity, if it be understood of what we would have others to do to us according to Reason, and not according to the Partial Affection we are apt to have to our selves. For this Rule is founded upon the second great Commandment, as our Saviour calls it, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self.*

3. *As to Godliness.* He lays the Foundation of that upon the first and great Commandment, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart and with all thy Soul and with all thy Strength.* We need not to question, but where-ever there is such a Love of God, as is here required, there will be true Godliness in all the parts of it. And where this is wanting, all external Shews of Devotion want the true Life and Spirit of it. For it is the Love of God which makes all our weak and imperfect Services to be acceptable to him; and without it all our Prayers and our Fastings, and all other Appearances of Devotion, are empty and insipid Formalities.

Not,

Not, but that the Acts themselves are Commendable; but, they are like a Body without a Soul, dull and heavy; or like the leaves of a Tree in Autumn, which make a great noise in the Wind, but are dry, sapless and soon fall to the Ground. But where the Love of God prevails, it keeps up the Life and Order and Vigour of Devotion; and preserves it from being tainted by hypocrisie, or choaked by the love of this World, or decaying from want of Constancy and Resolution.

Thus I have set before you some of the most remarkable Duties of Christianity; not such as depend on the Opinions and Fancies of Men; but such as our Blessed Saviour, the great Law-giver of his Church, hath made the necessary Conditions of our Salvation by him.

And what now can we say for our Selves? We do call Christ *Lord, Lord*; or else we renounce our Baptismal Vow, and all hopes of Salvation by him. But can we say that *we love God*, when we love what he hates, *viz. Sin*? Can we say, *we love him with all our Heart and Soul*, when our Hearts are so much divided between him and the Vanities of this World?

A Sermon preached before

Can we say, *we love him with all our Might*, when our Love to God is apt to grow cold and remiss upon any apprehension of Difficulties? Can we say, that we *love our Neighbour as our Selves*, when we despise and scorn him, or over-reach and defraud him, or oppress and ruin him? If it go not so far, are we as tender of his Reputation as of our own; as unwilling to see him injured, as ready to help him in his Necessities, as we should desire it from others, if we were in the same Circumstances? If strict Sobriety and Temperance be the Duties of Christians, where are those Vertues to be generally found? I do not speak of particular Persons; but I am afraid, there is hardly such a thing left as a *Sober Party* among us. What profane, customary Swearing is every-where to be met with? What Complaints are daily made of the Abounding of all sorts of Wickedness, even to an open Scorn and Contempt, not barely of *Christianity*, but of any kind of *Religion*? For, many who have long denied the *Power*, seem to be grown weary of the very *Form of Godliness*; unless it serves some particular End and Design. So that, if we look abroad in the World,

World, we find little Regard shew'd to the Precepts of Christ; and yet those who commit these things call Christ *Lord, Lord*. What is the meaning of all this gross Hypocrisie? Nothing would have been thought more Absurd or Ridiculous, than for one who used no kind of Abstinence, to be thought a *Pythagorean*; or one that indulged his Passions a *Stoick*; or one who eats Flesh and drinks Wine a *Brachman*, or *Banian*. It is really, as much for any one to break the known and particular Precepts of Christ, and yet desire to be thought a *Christian*. For, a loose, profane and debauched Christian, is a Contradiction in Morality; It is to be a Christian against Christ, to call him *Lord, Lord*, and yet to despise his Laws and Authority. A Star without Light, a Guide without Eyes, a Man without Reason, a Sun with nothing but Spots, are not more absurd Suppositions, than a Christian without any Grace, or Vertue.

But let us say what we will, there are and will be such, who will own Christ and call him *Lord, Lord*, and yet will not part with their sins for him. There were Multitudes of such formerly who would lay down their
Lives

Lives for the Ground he trod on, and yet would not mortifie one Sin for his sake. The Reason is still the same which our Saviour mentions, they hope that calling him *Lord, Lord*, will make amends for all; and yet it is not possible that fairer warning should be given to any, than he hath given in this Case, that let them pretend what they will, he will say to them at the great Day, *Depart from me*

Matt. 7. 25.
Luk. 13. 27

all ye workers of Iniquity. O dreadfull Sentence! Not, to be mention'd without Horrour, nor to be thought upon without Astonishment. How miserable, for ever miserable, must their condition be, whom Christ at that day shall bid to *Depart* from him! "What is this, some will be apt to say, but to put all Christians into utter Despair? For, who is there that can say, that he hath done all that Christ hath said? Truly, we have a sufficient Ground for deep Humility and serious Repentance, and timely Reformation. But there is a great difference between *the Failing of our Duty* and *the Works of Iniquity*; between the *Infirmities* of those who sincerely endeavour to do his Will, and the *Presumptuous Sins* of those who despise it; between *Sins committed*

ted and heartily repented of; and Sins habitually practised and continued in, without any Marks of Amendment. Such must go out of this World in a State of Sin, and therefore can expect nothing but that dreadful Sentence, which I tremble at the very thoughts of Repeating. But there are others, who in the sincerity of their hearts have endeavour'd to do his Will; and whose Sincerity will be so far accepted by him, that he will say to them at that Day, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.* Matt. 25.
34.

To which God of his infinite Mercy bring us through the Mediation of Christ Jesus our Lord.

F I N I S.

**Lately Printed for Henry Mortlock at
the Phoenix in St. Paul's Church-Yard,**

**A Sermon Preached before the Queen at White-Hall
Febr. 22. 1688. upon 1 Pet. 14. verse 18.**

**A Sermon Preached before the King and Queen at
White-Hall, March the 23d. 1688. upon Ecclesiastes 18.
verse 9.**

**Christian Magnanimity: A Sermon Preached in the Ca-
thedral Church at Worcester, at the Time of the Assizes,
September 21. 1690. upon 2 Tim. 1. verse 7. All, three
by the Right Reverend Father in God, Edward Lord Bi-
shop of Worcester.**

**The Bishop of Worcester's Charge to the Clergy of his
Diocese, in his Primary Visitation, begun at Worcester,
Septemb. 11. 1690. Quarto.**